

Leading a bipartisan group of 103 House members, Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) today called on President Obama to fully fund the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in his FY2013 budget. The President is expected to unveil his budget in the coming weeks.

In a letter to the President, Welch and his colleagues are urging him to request at least \$4.7 billion in LIHEAP funding, the level the program was funded at in FY2011. Funding for LIHEAP in FY2012 was cut by 24 percent to \$3.47 billion nationwide. Vermont has received \$19.5 million in LIHEAP funding thus far in FY2012, down from \$26 million in FY2011.

Welch – along with Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) – are cosponsors of legislation to provide additional FY2012 funding for LIHEAP to at least match last year's total.

"LIHEAP is a critical lifeline for Vermonters in need," Welch said. "With a tough economy and rising fuel costs, even keeping the funding level stable represents a cut to Vermonters struggling to hang on. As we work to reign in the federal debt, we should not do so on the backs of those who can least afford it."

Leading the effort with Welch are Reps. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Lou Barletta (R-Pa.), James McGovern (D-Mass.), Peter King (R-N.Y.), Michael Grimm (R-N.Y.), John Larson (D-Ct.) and Jim Gerlach (R-Pa.). To see the letter to the President, [click HERE](#).